



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact: Michael Negard**  
**Telephone: (334) 255-3770**  
[michael.j.negard.civ@mail.mil](mailto:michael.j.negard.civ@mail.mil)  
<https://safety.army.mil/>

## **Give the Gift of Safety**

**Army releases holiday leave safety campaign 2021**

### **COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS** **U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center**

FORT RUCKER, Ala. — As autumn fades into winter and long sunny days wane into longer chilly nights, it's time to reassess personal risk as Soldiers prepare for their long-awaited holiday leave. According to U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center (USACRC) FY21 mishap data, the holiday leave period is the second-deadliest time of year for off-duty Soldier mishaps.

To help Soldiers and leaders mitigate their personal risks during the holiday season, which runs the week before Thanksgiving through the first week after the New Year, USACRC released its annual holiday leave campaign today.

Mishaps involving private motor vehicles remain the greatest threat Soldiers will face during the holiday. The risk posed by driving in winter weather conditions and around active wildlife, while important to mitigate, are secondary to the "get-home-itis" many Soldiers will experience once their leave begins. Behavior-based errors — speeding, failure to wear seat belts, fatigue — are the most prevalent factors in private motor vehicle mishaps, with alcohol use being the greatest contributing factor in holiday leave fatalities.

"A safe, mishap-free holiday begins well before Soldiers begin their travels," said Brig. Gen. Andrew C. Hilmes, commanding general of USACRC, and director of Army Safety. "Although Soldiers are often away from their units during the holidays, their leaderships' influence can still have a strong impact on their behaviors."

Campaign products will help leaders build and manage top-quality seasonal safety programs geared toward their unique needs. Data from the Army Readiness Assessment Program (ARAP) shows that units prioritizing safety and implementing an effective safety culture experience fewer off-duty mishaps. Soldiers, civilians and family members may also use campaign tools to help minimize risk and prevent mishaps. The campaign kit will include posters, feature articles, videos and public service announcements focusing on timely safety topics like safe driving in wintery conditions, resiliency, cold weather injuries, home safety and much more.

"The holiday period, Thanksgiving through New Year's, is one of our most anticipated times of year," said Sergeant Major of the Army Michael Grinston. "NCO leaders, as you prepare for the holidays, think about safety and risk management before your teammates begin their leave. As Soldiers, we know and follow standards 24/7. As leaders, we take care of our people 24/7. Safety is the most precious gift we can give this holiday season."

The campaign is available on USACRC's website at <https://safety.army.mil>, as well as the organization's social media platforms Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The campaign, scheduled to run through January, will provide a gradual release of tools and products focusing on important, season-appropriate safety topics.

The U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center preserves Army readiness through analysis, training, and the development of systems that prevent accidental loss of our people and resources.